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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE VOICE

IN

Speaking and Singing.

A TREATISE

FOR

Self-Instruction and Teaching Others

IN

The True Art of Vocal Culture.

BY

Rev. John S. Parker, A. M.,
Conductor of the Viroqua Chautauqua Assembly,
Viroqua, Wis.

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THE VOICE

IN

SPEAKING AND SINGING.

THE PRINCIPLES AT THE FOUNDATION OF

PROPER VOICE PRODUCTION,

ARRANGED IN TEN LESSONS

FOR

Ten Successive Weeks of Teaching or Practice.

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PUBLISHER, L. R. GOTT,
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IMPORTANT INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

After years of teaching, both East and West, without meeting a pupil in whose case the instructions have been unsuccessful, the author puts his system before the public. It is not the discovery of a new method of voice production, but an original arrangement of exercises, so that, one naturally following another, the correct practice of each one, where needed, being tested by readily observed physical movements, the true method of voice production may be mastered without a teacher.

The first five exercises train the organs which must be used in all proper vocalization, and should be practiced in the order given, taking one week for each lesson.

A THOROUGH MASTERY OF THE SECOND FIVE EXERCISES, taking one week for each lesson,

Saves unnecessary wear upon lungs and vocal chords;

Gives the means of breaking up a monotonous delivery;

Enables one who is hoarse from cold to speak or sing, for an ordinary performance, without irritating the organs of speech;

Gives command of that range of tones which fits the speaker, with perfect ease and readiness, to adapt the voice to the requirements of emphasis, and the variations in the size of auditoriums and the numbers of audiences; and

Makes it possible for the singer to use the required volume for any building, without changing the key to be employed in rendering the piece as written.

THE TREATISE IS ESPECIALLY RECOMMENDED FOR USE BY:—

Those who employ what are called "head tones";

Any who use pitch for emphasis and sustained passages;

All who find it difficult to make themselves heard before large audiences;

Persons whose vocal organs have failed them because of wrong methods of voice production;

Those who use the proper method but who do not know how they came to do so, nor how to instruct others concerning its use; and

Teachers who would gladly have a systematized plan of teaching, which can not fail to render their instruction successful.

THE FOLLOWING PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ARE OFFERED:—

Stand erect, as one would stand against the wall, touching it at every possible point of contact, from head to heels.

Before speaking or singing in public take no food within two hours preceding the performance, and then not more than the white of an egg thoroughly beaten with a little sugar, a cup of tea or coffee, or a

glass of milk or water, hot or cold, and a small piece of bread and butter.

After an evening performance take a very light lunch.

For temporary hoarseness use "Frog in Your Throat?" Hance Brothers & White, Phila., Pa.

If delivery is affected by chronic nasal catarrh, cleanse the nostrils daily, and especially an hour before speaking, with a douche of warm salt water, in the proportion of a teaspoonful of salt to a half pint or a pint of water.

If an elongated palate troubles, gargle a solution of a tablespoonful of saleratus in a glass of cold water daily, and especially an hour before the public use of the voice.

The daily practice of the physical exercises laid down in Blakie's "How to Get Strong and How to Stay So," by strengthening the whole body, will in many cases tone up the organs of speech.

The exercises of the ten lessons following may not properly be practiced by ladies who persist in tight lacing.

All the exercises of these lessons should be taken, after the first ten weeks, daily, if possible, throughout life.

TEN WEEKS' PRACTICE.

LESSON FIRST.

Stand erect, do not bend the arms either at wrists or elbows, slowly raise and lower the shoulders one hundred times. This exercise strengthens the upper muscles of the chest and back, and makes it possible, eventually, to sit and stand with ease in the erect position.

Practice upon arising in the morning, before dinner and upon retiring at night.

LESSON SECOND.

To the first exercise add each time the following practice:—

Extend the arms horizontally in front of the chest, letting the palms meet, then swing them backward, as nearly horizontally as possible, till, without turning at the wrists, the backs of the hands meet. Repeat this movement fifty times at each practice. This gives strength to the muscles which raise the chest, as required in the next lesson.

LESSON THIRD.

Three times daily add to the exercises previously given the following:—

By a purely muscular movement, without taking a breath each time, rapidly throw the chest upward and forward. Repeat this fifty times at each practice. In this exercise, when the chest is moved upward and forward, the abdominal muscle is drawn in toward the backbone.

The dotted line in Fig. I shows the outline of the front of the body when this takes place. This is the position in which the chest should be retained, not only while speaking and singing, but also when the organs of speech are at rest.

FIG. I.

LESSON FOURTH.

Three times daily add to the exercises previously given the following:—

Stand erect, throw the chest upward and forward, as in Lesson Third, retain it in that position, and alternately move the abdominal muscle in, toward the backbone, and out, away from it. The greatest movement of the abdominal muscle, in this exercise, should not be low down, but as near the waist line as possible. This exercise is constantly used in all speaking, singing and breathing, properly executed, and must be mastered. It is a discouraging practice

because of the temporary soreness it occasions; but at the end of a week or two of faithful, and not too severe, practice, the soreness passes away, and it will then be as easy to move the abdominal outline, at the waist line, from two to three inches, backward and forward, as to move the fingers.

It is impossible to accomplish this practice without a slight accompanying movement of the chest. This is also true in its practical use in speaking, singing and breathing. But it must be observed this accompanying movement is not that heaving of the chest which accompanies the inhalation and exhalation of air in "chest" as distinguished from "abdominal" breathing. (See Lesson Fifth.)

The dotted lines in Fig. II show the extremes of the inward and outward outline of the abdomen, at the waist, in this practice. Repeat this exercise not more than twenty times at each practice.

FIG. II.

LESSON FIFTH.

Three times daily add to the exercises previously given the following:—

Stand erect, throw the chest upward and forward as in Lesson Third, retain it in that position as in Lesson Fourth, expel the air from the lungs, not by lowering the chest, but by drawing in the abdominal muscle as in Lesson Fourth; then inhale all the air possible, not by raising the chest, for that is already raised to the highest position, but by moving the abdominal muscle forward, as, also, in Lesson Fourth. Continue this exercise of alternately expelling and inhaling the air, as explained, one hundred times at each practice. After this week's practice make this the *constant* method of breathing. It makes easy work for the lungs in all vocal exercise and saves the strain otherwise put upon the organs of speech. The inward and outward motion of the abdominal muscle causes a corresponding upward and downward motion of the diaphragm; consequently, the real work of voice production is accomplished by this upward motion of the diaphragm forcing the air past the vocal chords, which are simply held in the position for the production of the sound desired, when the air shall thus pass upward; while inhalation becomes, simply, not a drawing in, but an inrush, of air as the diaphragm is lowered, when the air has been expelled. If there be difficulty in acquiring this method, it will be easy to conquer by lying on the back, on couch or bed, placing one hand on the abdominal muscle at the waist line, and, by gentle downward pressure, assisting in the expulsion of

the air, leaving off the pressure as the air again rushes in and the abdominal muscle rises in the act of another inhalation. This *must* be mastered.

LESSON SIXTH.

The first four lessons should hereafter be practiced at least once daily for the remainder of life. The fifth, as already stated, is to be the constant habit, walking, running, sitting, waking, sleeping, silent or using the voice, from this time forth. The lessons, from the Sixth to the Tenth, inclusive, should be practiced daily, at the most convenient time and place, and when the stomach is not full of food. The Sixth is a test lesson, and, if mastered, the way to easy sound production is at command.

Take the position of Lesson Third, arrange the lips and vocal chords for uttering the pure, orotund "O" sound, on the lowest key at command; expel the air as in Lesson Fifth, and the sound produced, if the directions have been accurately followed, will be the pure sound required.

There are two physical tests of correct practice in this exercise.

First: If the sound produced be the proper one, the so called "Adam's apple" will move as far as possible down the neck and remain there until the sound has ceased. This may be observed by touching it with the finger tips.

Second: When this sound is properly produced there will be no harsh, rasping, irritating sensation in the throat.

Once having it at command, begin it at the commencement of exhalation and continue it as long as

there is any air in the lungs, and practice it one hundred times daily. Use the tone frequently by repeating in it such a sentence as the following: "Eternity, thou awful, dreadful thought." Always use this tone in laughing, rather than the falsetto, so common, even among men.

After this week make this the tone of ordinary conversation, with, of course, as soon as possible, the required variations in volume and pitch, as taught later. Notice violations of, and conformities to, the rule in self and others, and intelligently make needed corrections. An important method of determining whether this lesson has been conquered is to read in a whisper. If the throat be not strained and wearied by the effort it is ordinarily an evidence that the true method is used, and if strained and wearied, a certain indication that this Sixth Lesson has not been mastered. If there is great difficulty in accomplishing the practice of this lesson, turn the end of the tongue upward and backward so that the tip points to the palate; then, with the tongue in this position, make an effort as though about to swallow the tongue. The "Adams' apple" will at once move down to the position required. Retaining the tongue and "Adam's apple" in these positions, make the "O" sound required. After a few efforts thus made, the sound may be produced in the ordinary manner.

LESSON SEVENTH.

To leave the subject of drill at the point of mastery of Lesson Sixth would be to leave the student with an easy method of voice production, yet the production of a voice, which, from its monotony, would be

unpleasant to the hearer. While, in these lessons, we do not treat of expression, emphasis, inflection, nor adaptation of voice to the character of the passage delivered, we place at command the tones to be used, under the requirements of proper heed to these points, whose rules and exercises are to be learned under the direction of competent teachers and good text books. There are three general principles on which depends the variations required in the vocal art of speaking and singing.

These are volume, force and pitch.

While volume and force are applicable to any pitch, it is well to practice first on the lowest pitch or key possible.

Each day, after practicing Lesson Sixth, produce the sound as many times as possible, making it a *very* little louder each time than the preceding, until the organs refuse to make it any more loudly. Be careful in this exercise not to change the pitch or key.

Working always on the same key, there will usually be twenty degrees of loudness attainable. This is called "volume." As an appeal to the eye, the following may be helpful:

This principle mastered will place at command, instead of a high, screaming tone, a large, firm voice, (with no danger of breaking), for emphasis and sustained passages. Such a voice will *fill* the auditorium instead of being lost among the rafters.

One who has these twenty degrees of volume at

command will be able to adapt the voice, with no extra strain upon the vocal chords, to the numbers of the audience and the size of the building.

Deaf people, in the social gathering or the public audience, hear these tones much more distinctly than those of higher pitch.

In buildings with good acoustic properties, every seat being occupied, while the volume marked "one," above, is that for ordinary social conversation, in addressing an audience of five hundred volume number four should be the smallest used; one thousand, volume number eight; two thousand, volume number twelve, and so on, in each case using larger volume, as needed, for emphasis and sustained passages. In all this operation the only extra exertion in using the larger volumes will be a stronger inward pull on the abdominal muscle. With this there will be a greater rigidity of this muscle, and where the greatest volume is used, this muscle will be drawn far in toward the backbone, and to the touch will have the feeling of solidity belonging to all well developed muscles when in most active service.

To use the method of this lesson, produce sound, alone, as the abdominal muscle is moving inward, and recover breath, not by cutting sentences into panting spaces between every three or four words, heaving the chest, catching a short breath and so on continually; but at the end of each sentence, or during rhetorical pauses, let the abdominal muscle fly forward, always keeping the chest well up, when the air will rush into the lungs as into a vacuum. Practice the following exercise, using at present the lowest

key, and employing the volume indicated by the numbers employed, securing the effect of emphasis by pause after the chosen word.

The numbers here employed indicate the volume for an audience of five or six hundred.

4
"Up the street came the rebel tread,

4
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead;

4
Beneath his slouched hat he glanced, left and right;

4 6 4
The Old Flag met his sight.

18 4
'Halt!' and the dust browned ranks stood still.

18 4
'Fire!' Outblazed the rifle blast.

* * * * * * * * *

8 10 8
'Who touches a hair of yon gray head,

12 16 19 4
Dies like a dog! March on!' he said."

LESSON EIGHTH.

Force, as stated above, is another method of variation in the vocal part of an address. It is the use of the required volume, delivered in a quick and explosive manner, and is accomplished by a sudden drawing in of the abdominal muscle, and a consequent quick expulsion of the air from the lungs past the

vocal chords held in proper position for the required sound.

It is used in giving orders where sudden action is required, and also where anger, or fright, or pain, cause sudden exclamations. As an example, deliver the command of "The Douglas," in "Lord Marmion" explosively, using the volume indicated:

10	10	12	4	16	17
"'Warden!	Ho!	Let	the	port-cullis	fall!'"

Practice each day, after the practice of Lessons Sixth and Seventh, the quick, explosive effect of force on each of the twenty degrees of volume above.

LESSON NINTH.

Pitch is one of the most important methods of varying the effect of vocal performance. Its variations are used by the orator in conversational delivery, in imitating sounds given forth by animals, men and other sound producers, and it is that which makes a musical scale a possibility. Some seem naturally to properly employ its variations and some only upon the most careful drill under competent teachers.

Beginning with the lowest pure sound, of Lesson Sixth, raising the pitch a *very* little at each effort, twenty different degrees of pitch may be produced.

Produce, again and again, after each practice of Lessons Sixth, Seventh and Eighth, twenty different degrees of pitch, from the lowest to the highest, using, each time a sound is produced, the inward abdominal pull as in all the previous vocal exercises.

The "Adams' apple" will move from the lowest

position in the neck slightly higher each time the pitch is raised, till at last it will be at the highest point possible when the highest pitch is reached.

LESSON TENTH.

Each one of the twenty different degrees of pitch of Lesson Ninth may be uttered in the twenty different degrees of volume of Lesson Seventh, without varying the key in the slightest. In this way four hundred different degrees of sound are easily at command, it being no more difficult, when this lesson is mastered, to produce the twentieth volume in the twentieth degree of pitch, than the first volume in the lowest degree of pitch, as in Lesson Sixth. This statement need not be considered a startling one, since it is claimed the fibers of Corti are 3,000 in number, rendering it possible to distinguish as many varieties of sound from various sources. A speaker may make use of this practice in breaking up the monotony of delivery, as suggested in Lesson Seventh, by occasionally delivering a few words or sentences in a higher key, but with the volume which would be used were this change not made. The mastery of this exercise is of especial value to singers. The singer who has five hundred in audience will strike the first note of the song in the fourth volume, and yet use the very key in which the music is written, singing the whole piece in this volume, yet without changing the key of a single note. Should the audience be larger the volume alone will be changed as in Lesson Seventh.

In the practice of this Tenth Lesson, and in its practical application in speaking and singing, the

voice must be produced in the same manner as in all the previous exercises.

Daily, after the practice of the foregoing lessons, beginning at the lowest note in the scale of pitch of Lesson Ninth, produce the pure "O" sound in twenty degrees of volume, as in Lesson Seventh in the case of the lowest degree of pitch, in each one of the twenty degrees of pitch at command.

The habitual use of the method outlined in these lessons, in every day conversation, will make it a second nature to those who have needed to master it, and thus, without especial thought, it will eventually become the method upon the platform, before the public audience.

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